

All of us, Democrats and Republicans, liberals and conservatives, are going to make sure that our markets remain free and competitive. Cheap talking points are not going to cut it; only serious debate will.

I am pleased that recent efforts to rise above the partisan fray and treat this subject with the seriousness it deserves have paid off today.

I expect our colleagues to vote for Makan because of the high-quality lawyer he really is.

I thank my colleagues for joining me in this debate. I congratulate Makan, who is sure to make us all very pleased with the way he can run things and the way he can begin this important work that he knows is important. We know it is important; I particularly know it is important.

Makan has been an honest, decent, wonderful man. He is a good father. He has been a terrific staffer here on Capitol Hill. He has worked with both Democrats and Republicans in good faith. I think almost all of them, if they are honest, will say he was a very, very good person to work with and a wonderful person to fill this position.

It is a blessing that someone like Makan, who comes from a very humble family, could rise to the top in this particular position in antitrust, and I am sure he will do an honest, decent job within the antitrust laws as they are configured and written.

I am proud of him. I think the world of him. I hope everybody will vote for him. But if not, I will commend him, and I know he will do a good job in this particular position.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

VOTE ON TARBERT NOMINATION

Mr. HATCH. Mr. President, I yield back all time on both sides, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There is a sufficient second.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Heath P. Tarbert, of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Treasury?

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY) and the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. LEE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 87, nays 8, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 204 Ex.]

YEAS—87

Alexander	Feinstein	Murphy
Baldwin	Fischer	Murray
Barrasso	Flake	Nelson
Bennet	Franken	Paul
Blumenthal	Gardner	Perdue
Blunt	Graham	Peters
Booker	Grassley	Portman
Boozman	Hassan	Reed
Brown	Hatch	Risch
Burr	Heinrich	Roberts
Cantwell	Heitkamp	Rounds
Capito	Heller	Rubio
Cardin	Hoeven	Sasse
Carper	Inhofe	Schumer
Casey	Isakson	Scott
Cassidy	Johnson	Shaheen
Collins	Kaine	Shelby
Coons	Kennedy	Stabenow
Corker	King	Sullivan
Cornyn	Klobuchar	Tester
Cortez Masto	Lankford	Thune
Cotton	Leahy	Tillis
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	Manchin	Udall
Daines	McCain	Van Hollen
Duckworth	McCaskill	Warner
Durbin	McConnell	Whitehouse
Enzi	Moran	Wicker
Ernst	Murkowski	Wyden

NAYS—8

Gillibrand	Markey	Schatz
Harris	Merkley	Warren
Hirono	Sanders	

NOT VOTING—5

Cochran	Menendez	Young
Donnelly	Strange	

The nomination was confirmed.

VOTE ON DELRAHIM NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nomination of Makan Delrahim, of California, to be an Assistant Attorney General?

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN), the Senator from Alabama (Mr. STRANGE), and the Senator from Indiana (Mr. YOUNG).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Indiana (Mr. DONNELLY), the Senator from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ), and the Senator from Maryland (Mr. VAN HOLLEN) are necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 73, nays 21, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 205 Ex.]

YEAS—73

Alexander	Boozman	Carper
Barrasso	Brown	Casey
Bennet	Burr	Cassidy
Blumenthal	Capito	Collins
Blunt	Cardin	Coons

Corker	Hoeven	Portman
Cornyn	Inhofe	Reed
Cotton	Isakson	Risch
Crapo	Johnson	Roberts
Cruz	Kennedy	Rounds
Daines	King	Rubio
Durbin	Klobuchar	Sasse
Enzi	Lankford	Scott
Ernst	Leahy	Shaheen
Feinstein	Lee	Shelby
Fischer	Manchin	Stabenow
Flake	McCain	Sullivan
Franken	McCaskill	Tester
Gardner	McConnell	Thune
Graham	Moran	Tillis
Grassley	Murkowski	Toomey
Hatch	Nelson	Warner
Heitkamp	Paul	Wicker
Heller	Perdue	
Hirono	Peters	

NAYS—21

Baldwin	Hassan	Sanders
Booker	Heinrich	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Cortez Masto	Markey	Udall
Duckworth	Merkley	Warren
Gillibrand	Murphy	Whitehouse
Harris	Murray	Wyden

NOT VOTING—6

Cochran	Menendez	Van Hollen
Donnelly	Strange	Young

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motions to reconsider are considered made and laid upon the table and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume consideration of the Erickson nomination.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nomination.

The bill clerk read the nomination of Ralph E. Erickson, of North Dakota, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Dakota.

TAX REFORM

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, one of the Senate Republicans' most important priorities for the rest of this year is passing comprehensive tax reform. Why? Because comprehensive tax reform is perhaps the single most important thing we can do to get our economy back on the path to long-term health. Comprehensive tax reform done right will boost jobs. It will increase wages. It will provide much needed tax relief for middle-income taxpayers and families. It will help businesses reinvest in their operations, employees, and new products. And most importantly, it will help us achieve strong, consistent economic growth.

Over the past few weeks, leaders from the House, Senate, and White House have been meeting to develop the framework for the tax reform bill we will take up later this year. This morning, they unveiled that framework. The framework supports Republicans' five principles for tax reform: providing tax relief for the middle class; increasing wages, jobs, and economic growth;

keeping good-paying jobs here at home; increasing American competitiveness in the global economy; and simplifying the Tax Code.

The framework released today emphasizes tax relief for the middle class.

First and foremost, we are going to ensure that working families receive a much needed increase in take-home pay. Right now, 50 percent of families are living paycheck to paycheck, while one-third of people across this country say they are just \$400 away from a financial crisis. That is not acceptable.

Our tax reform plan will ensure that these families are no longer left behind. Our plan will increase the standard deduction, which will provide tax relief to those families who need it the most. It will also enhance the child tax credit, and I don't need to tell anyone that the important work of raising a family is getting more and more expensive. It is time for hard-working families to get a break with a larger child tax credit. Finally, we will be lowering the rates on middle-class families. By collapsing the seven income tax brackets to three, we will ensure that working families get to keep more of what they earn.

Second, our tax plan will increase wages, jobs, and economic growth by lowering taxes and improving cost recovery for American businesses and job creators. The framework released today lays out a goal of a 20-percent corporate tax rate. Right now, our corporate tax rate is the highest in the developed world. Our competitors pay an average rate of 22.5 percent, while U.S. companies face a 35-percent tax rate. That is a big problem. Our uncompetitive tax rate has driven companies to move their headquarters and jobs overseas and led to wage stagnation and a lack of opportunity for American workers. Lowering the corporate rate will create jobs and increase wages for working families across the country.

An equally important priority laid out in the framework is lower tax rates for small businesses, farms, and ranches. Like bigger businesses, small businesses—from partnerships to S corporations—currently face high tax rates, at times even exceeding those paid by large corporations. Lowering tax rates for these businesses and creating a new maximum passthrough rate will allow a business to reinvest more of its earnings in successful operations. In short, it will help these job creators thrive. The Republican tax plan will also allow for unprecedented expensing. Allowing small businesses to recover their costs more quickly will free up capital and allow them to grow and to create jobs.

The framework released today also shows how we are going to meet our goal of making America more competitive and keeping those good-paying jobs here at home. A key part of keeping good-paying jobs here at home is making the United States an attractive place to do business by reforming our outdated worldwide tax system.

Having a worldwide tax system means that American companies pay U.S. taxes on the profit they make here at home as well as on some or all of the profit they make abroad, once they bring that money back to the United States. The problem with this is that American companies are already paying taxes to foreign governments on the money they make abroad. Then, when they bring that money home, they too often end up having to pay taxes again on part of those profits and at the highest tax rate in the industrialized world. It is no surprise that this discourages businesses from bringing their profits back to the United States to invest in their domestic operations, new jobs, and increased wages.

Between 1983 and 2003, when the U.S. tax rate was much more competitive with those of other countries, there were 29 corporate inversions where U.S. companies moved abroad. Between 2003 and 2014, when other countries were dropping their corporate tax rates and shifting to territorial tax systems, there were 47 such inversions.

Our tax plan addresses this drag on our economy by moving from our outdated worldwide tax system to a territorial tax system. By shifting to a territorial tax system here in the United States—a move, I might add, that is supported by Members of both parties—we will eliminate the double taxation that encourages companies to send their investments and their operations overseas. Combine that with a reduction in our high corporate tax rate, and we can provide a strong incentive for U.S. companies to invest their profits at home in American jobs and American workers instead of abroad.

We will also simplify our Tax Code. Each year, Americans spend 2.6 billion hours filling out complicated individual tax forms. Not only is this a drag on our economy, it is an annual frustration and burden for hard-working families. The goal of our tax reform plan is to let American families complete their taxes on something as simple as a postcard.

Lower rates, fewer tax brackets, and a generally simplified code will end the complicated mess that too many families face every tax season.

We will continue to develop the details of this framework in the coming weeks as we work toward a final draft of our comprehensive tax reform bill. I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues in the Senate Finance Committee as we work to put our country on the path toward long-term economic health and the jobs, increased wages, and opportunities that come along with it.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

Mr. INHOFE. Will the Senator yield?

Mr. WYDEN. I will be happy to.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that at the conclusion of the remarks from my friend from Oregon, Senator WYDEN, that I be recognized for such time as I shall consume.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Oregon.

CHRONIC CARE ACT

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, often late at night when the Senate passes a piece of legislation by unanimous consent, people often don't get a chance to understand what it really means, and usually there is a sense of, well, this maybe won't be the most important thing coming down the road, and everybody just said OK, and so it passed the Senate.

Last night, the Senate took action on Medicare. At a time when 10,000 people will turn 65 every day for years and years to come, Medicare is something millions of older people rely on, and their kids and grandkids make plans to make sure their grandparents are taken care of, but also they want to know what their future is going to be all about.

What the Senate did last night—Democrats and Republicans coming together—is, in my view, transformational for seniors today and the beginning of an effort that is going to evolve in the days ahead for kids and their parents and their grandparents to, in effect, benefit from an updated Medicare guarantee that will stand the test of time for many years to come. The reason I say “updated Medicare guarantee” is that Medicare is not a voucher. It is not a piece of paper. It is not something you get and then, well, maybe it will do you some good, but if your healthcare costs go above your vouchers, you are going to get buried in costs. Medicare is a guarantee that vital services are going to be available to those over 65.

Last night, all Senators voted to send to the House of Representatives a bipartisan effort that was years in the making to update the Medicare guarantee to start focusing on chronic illnesses, such as cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and Alzheimer's.

Mr. President, I am going to make this a little bit personal. I am so grateful to Chairman HATCH, Senator ISAKSON, Senator WARNER—the bipartisan group in the Senate that has been working on this.

What I can tell the Senate tonight is that back when I was director of the Gray Panthers and ran the legal aid services for older people, Medicare was a very different program. Back in the 1970s when we were getting the Gray Panthers off the ground, it was a very different program than it is in 2017. Medicare really consisted of two parts. There was Part A. If a senior broke their ankle or needed surgery for a broken hip, they went to the hospital, and Medicare Part A would be there to cover a senior's surgery. If a senior had an awful bout of the flu, he or she visited the doctor and they used Part B. That is not Medicare in 2017. Medicare in 2017 is not primarily about treating the flu or a broken ankle. It is there for those conditions, and we are very glad that it is, but more than 90 percent of the Medicare dollars go to treat

older people with two or more chronic conditions. I will tell you, until the Senate Finance Committee, on a bipartisan basis, began to deal with this problem—and fortunately, we had a couple of colleagues in the House who picked up on it as well—my sense is that, basically, both political parties had missed it. They really missed the fact that most of the Medicare dollars—90 percent—go to seniors who have two or more of these chronic conditions. They might, for example, deal with diabetes and heart problems.

But today's seniors really face the kinds of conditions that didn't dominate the program back in the days when the Gray Panthers were getting off the ground. Today, seniors get their care in a variety of different ways. It is not just fee-for-service medicine. We have the Medicare Advantage Plan, Accountable Care Organizations, and other new systems under development.

So keeping up with those changes—updating the Medicare guarantee—ought to be a real priority for policymakers. That is why the Finance Committee has put so much effort over several years to get the bill that passed late last night across the finish line. There are still more steps before the policies reach the President's desk with strong bipartisan backing of the entire Senate. I am confident the job will get done.

The CHRONIC Care Act means more care at home and less in institutions. It will expand the use of lifesaving technology. It places a stronger focus on primary care. It gives older people—however they get their Medicare—more tools and options to receive care specifically targeted to address chronic illnesses and to keep them healthy. These, in my view, are a whole set of building blocks that you have to set in place to update the Medicare guarantee. Still to come is ensuring that every older person with multiple chronic conditions has an advocate to help them navigate through the Byzantine healthcare system in America.

I just want to highlight that point. If you have two or more of these chronic conditions—I guess the physicians call them comorbidities—you can be drowning, especially if you are not part of a coordinated Medicare program or Medicare Advantage or something like that. You can just be drowning in forms and processes and procedures. Lots of times, over the years, I have gotten calls from a child who is a lawyer or an engineer and they said: RON, help me out in trying to get through all of this maze of bureaucracy to try to get help for my parents. So I want it understood that what the Senate has done as of last night is an extraordinarily important beginning, but there is a lot more to do.

I want to wrap up my comments on this subject and, then, turn briefly to one other, by handing out some very appropriate thank-yous. I think the Finance Committee has handled this bill, in my view, as a model to work on a bi-

partisan basis. I want to thank Chairman HATCH. He and I put together the bipartisan chronic care working group two years ago, and Senators WARNER and ISAKSON did a first-rate job of leading it.

There is an awful lot of sweat equity put in by staff. A lot of staff worked on these issues while they were dealing with weddings. We had three children born in the process, and there were job changes.

Big thanks go to Karen Fisher, Hannah Hawkins, Kelsey Avery, Leigh Stuckhardt, Liz Jurinka, Beth Vrabell, and Matt Kazan on our team.

Chairman HATCH and his team really stepped up to work with us and all the Senators: Jay Khosla, Brett Baker, Jen Kuskowski, Katie Meyer-Simeon, and the chronic care lead, Erin Dempsey. Big thanks also go to Senators WARNER and ISAKSON for lending us Marvin Figueroa and Jordan Bartolomeo.

I close this portion of my remarks by saying that I think what happened last night—while certainly not something everybody is talking about this evening—is something that is going to be extraordinarily important in the years ahead. It is an issue that I know the President of the Senate and I have talked about—this whole question of healthcare and Medicare and the like. This was an important step to take and an important step we can build on. I hope the other body in the House will take action quickly.

PUERTO RICO AND U.S. VIRGIN ISLANDS RECOVERY EFFORT

Mr. President, let me turn now to this question of the Puerto Rico disaster. It has now been a week since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico, and 3.5 million American citizens are living amidst a horrifying state of devastation. When I was chairman of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which has jurisdiction over the affairs of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and America's other territorial possessions, I got very involved in the economic issues on the island.

But I come today to make a humanitarian plea to my friends and colleagues in the Senate. It is a plea not about economics. It is about people—fathers and mothers, children, grandparents, teachers, nurses, and thousands of veterans who served their communities and their country proudly. They are dealing with something that is almost unimaginable—this horrifying set of circumstances that they now find dominating their lives. The press accounts describe Puerto Rico as looking like a war zone. Millions of people on the island are without power, running water, and fuel. The few hospitals that are open—only 20 for the entire island—struggle to care for the injured and the sick. Many doctors and first responders are unable to get to their workplaces because their lives, too, are thrown into chaos, and 911 still doesn't work. Cell service and power are down. The airport in San Juan

barely functions now, after days of being completely off the grid.

It is almost impossible for us here in this city to imagine this. We have the basic infrastructure and health and safety that we take for granted every day. Only one word sums up the state of the islands—demolished. It is almost impossible to gauge the full extent of the devastation. Nobody knows how many lives have been lost or how many homes and businesses have been damaged beyond repair, and how many lives have been shattered.

What is known is that this disaster has affected the lives of every single one of the 3.5 million individuals living on the island and the millions more on U.S. mainland, who have had sleepless nights worrying about loved ones. This is a humanitarian crisis on American soil. It is past time to step up and provide immediate aid to help these Americans—not only for Puerto Rico but also for the U.S. Virgin Islands, which has also been clobbered by these storms. It is not just the right thing to do. It is the only thing to do.

A few hours ago, I joined 35 of my colleagues in sending a letter to the President, and we requested a number of concrete actions. There are other additional steps in my view that are vital. So I want to just tick through some of them on the floor.

First, the President has to issue a full disaster declaration for all of Puerto Rico, not just parts of it. Currently, 24 municipalities in Puerto Rico have yet to receive individual disaster assistance. This means that people who have lost their homes in these areas are ineligible for Federal assistance. This is unacceptable.

Next, while the President rightfully revised his original disaster declaration so that the island will not have to split the cost of disaster relief with the Federal Government for 180 days, the President should continue this assistance until the island is back on its feet.

The administration also needs to include funding and necessary emergency support for the Puerto Rico Medicaid Program in any emergency request. Medicaid in Puerto Rico doesn't work the way it does in the 50 states, where it is a guarantee of care for vulnerable, low-income people. Puerto Rico's Medicaid Program is built on a block grant, which means that in times of crisis, resources might not be there when it is needed most. Even before the disasters, Puerto Rico was close to depleting its Medicaid supplemental funding. When it does, it will have nowhere to turn to pay for medical care for many of its most vulnerable.

In my view, this is a perfect example of why block grants—as contemplated by the bill that we considered in the Finance Committee this week—Graham-Cassidy-Heller—and vital programs like Medicaid don't mix. It is a recipe for disaster.

In addition, there are expired tax provisions unique and vital to Puerto

Rico's economy, and they ought to be extended with any disaster relief package in order to give workers and businesses certainty and predictability. This includes tax incentives for producing goods in Puerto Rico and rebates for taxes on exported rum. In my view, if this is done properly and laid out in a proactive way, it will give predictability for the future and make a difference—an important difference to a lot of people on the job.

It is also vital to get Puerto Rico's electric grid up and running and provide power generators in the meantime. This isn't simply a matter of recharging phones or turning televisions back on for news updates. Going without power is life-threatening. Perishable food goes bad. Those with diabetes can't refrigerate their insulin. Hospitals have a difficult time running essential medical equipment, like dialysis machines or heart monitors. Air conditioners are useless, which is especially dangerous for kids and seniors given the hot, humid temperatures and the limited supply of safe water.

Another necessary step is to help ensure that Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands receive assistance as quickly as possible, and that would include a short-term waiver of the Jones Act. The Jones Act is an important policy for ensuring a vibrant U.S. maritime industry and for our national defense. But in times of disaster it is more important to get supplies to the impacted areas as quickly as possible. The government has granted such a waiver in Houston and Florida, and it is, in my view, beyond comprehension that they haven't done the same thing for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Finally, the administration needs to mount a full-court press to rebuild the islands' roads, ports, and airports. Once aid arrives, it is useless if you can't get it out to those who need it most.

As several of my colleagues and I wrote to the President today, our military is uniquely qualified to help Puerto Rico meet some of its critical recovery needs. That includes construction battalions that can repair power and surface transportation infrastructure.

I close by saying that the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are desperate for our help. This situation is extreme. Congress and the administration need to act as soon as possible. The cleanup from Maria and Irma is just the beginning. The fact is that these megastorms, fueled by global warming, are going to keep coming, even after the power is restored and the storm damage from Maria and Irma is repaired. There is going to be a lot of work necessary to reverse years of struggle and build up Puerto Rico's economy and infrastructure.

Coming to the aid of our fellow Americans at a time of crisis, in my view, is at the very core of being Americans. At home, I call it "the Oregon way." Our natural disaster this summer was wildfires. Recently, I was out visiting fire camps that stretched from

our northern border with Washington State to our southern border with California and many points in between. I met people helping Oregon fight fire from all over the United States. I met Floridians who were there the weekend Irma hit Florida. They were there to help Oregonians deal with fire, when they and their families were worried about what Irma was going to do to Florida.

Colleagues, I close simply by way of saying that we should expect no less in our efforts here in the Senate to help our fellow Americans in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The American people now have to be part of a mobilization to bring together the enormous resources in the Federal Government to help when disaster strikes. It is a matter of basic fairness and humanity to help protect and restore these American citizens and lands.

I yield the floor.

I thank the Senator from Oklahoma for his courtesy.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. DAINES). The Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, first of all, let me say to the Senator from Oregon that help is on its way. It is a very difficult thing because we don't have any idea how long this is going to last. When you stop to think about a land that is in the tropics not having electricity, it is something that is hard to imagine and to get arms around the devastation that takes place. I appreciate the fact that he has brought that up.

WORK OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, when I watch the news, I can't help but see that the media is showing a kind of picture of Washington that really doesn't exist. The news would have the public believe that there is a lot of dysfunction in the administration, and nothing is getting done. But I can share some examples of how the government has been working to get America back in business.

In my former life, I participated for some 20 years or longer in a free enterprise business. I was making money. I was losing money. I was hiring people, doing what I thought Americans were supposed to be doing. All that time, the major problem I had was the obstruction of the Federal Government. One of the reasons I actually ran in the first place was to try to save the free enterprise system. I never dreamed that we would end up with an administration—as well-meaning as the Obama administration was—that would be putting people out of business.

During the last administration, the Obama administration, new rules were created that had no purpose but to hinder economic growth. In fact, President Obama is the first President since Hoover not to hit a 3-percent GDP growth in any year of his Presidency.

With every industry coming under scrutiny from every regulatory agency, President Obama added more regulations to the Federal Register than any

other President in history. Businesses are complying with regulations, costing in the neighborhood of \$2 trillion. You have to keep in mind that when you hear the businesses and corporations are paying this, it is not the businesses that are paying it. It is the public—the people who are out there, and they, through increased costs of goods and services or through taxes, are paying it.

I heard an alarming figure the other day that some 65 percent of the people in America—this is a poll that is about a week old—are opposed to any stopping of regulations in corporations. Yet they are the very ones who are paying for this fun they are having.

This administration has tried to do something about all the overregulation, all the rules that the previous administration had put in place. There are two ways you can do this. One is through Executive orders. People know what those are; that is, the President coming along and giving an Executive order that will undo damage that was done by a previous Executive order imposing a new rule on America. That has been taking place.

At the same time, the other way of doing it is through a CRA resolution. Not many people know what a CRA resolution is. A CRA resolution is a Congressional Review Act resolution. It started about 20 years ago and has never been used until this administration. What it does is say that if you have up to 30 Members of the Senate, you can get a CRA resolution against a rule that some administration has put in place in a certain time period. It is the way people who are elected to office, accountable to the people, can get things done and be answerable to the people, as opposed to an unelected bureaucrat who is out there imposing hardships and rules on the public.

Actually, this administration came in, and they passed 14 Congressional Review Act resolutions; that is, 14 in the first few weeks, actually. The savings from repeal of these 14 regulations were estimated to be \$3.7 billion in costs and 4.2 million hours of paperwork, the most expensive of which—this is kind of interesting because I introduced a CRA resolution. It happens to be that mine was the first one to pass. So I had the first signing ceremony with our new President Trump during the initial days of his administration.

The rule was imposed by the Obama administration. It was one that would force domestic oil and gas companies to release all of the information they had in formulating their estimates and their bids in competition with maybe China or other countries, and it was putting our domestic oil and gas companies at a competitive disadvantage. This was all part of the Obama war on fossil fuels. Everyone knows that fossil fuels are oil, coal, and gas, and this was an effort to do that. We introduced a resolution repealing that. It was a CRA resolution, and it was successful. We

had our signing ceremony, and that was history.

That is 1 of 45—some Executive orders—and 1 of 14 successful CRA resolutions. In addition to the CRA resolutions, President Trump has signed 45 Executive orders with the goal of reducing redtape and cutting back on harmful administrative redtape.

Thanks to our colleagues on the other side of the aisle for changing the Senate rules because, with their help, President Trump and a Republican-led Senate have been able to confirm one of the most conservative Cabinets in history, and they have been working to implement the President's pro-business, pro-jobs, pro-economic growth policy.

If you want to see the effect that this administration is having, you need only to look at the energy industry. Of course, that is to say nothing about the fact that we now have a great conservative judge. But when you look at the energy industry, it has been under attack for 8 years.

Within weeks after taking office, the Army Corps of Engineers under the Trump administration approved an easement for the Dakota Access Pipeline that had been withheld by the Obama administration because of nothing more than political pressure from the far left.

The next month, the State Department issued a crossborder permit for the Keystone Pipeline. Again, the permit had been withheld purely for political far-left reasons.

Later the same month, the Department of the Interior lifted the coal leasing ban that the Obama administration had placed on Federal land. Federal lands have about 40 percent of the coal production in the United States, so that was just devastating to that industry. It was a killer.

Another notable win for energy came just last week out of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; that is, FERC. FERC was without a forum from February until mid-August, creating a backlog and delaying \$50 million of energy infrastructure projects from moving forward. The new forum has quickly gone to work to address that backlog, improving pipelines and power agreements.

However, a decision made last week has clearly sent a message that America's energy sector is open for business again. For years, New York State had been delaying consideration of water certifications that are required for FERC approval to allow construction of several federally approved pipelines.

The Millennium Pipeline, in particular, would take natural gas 9 miles from one pipeline to a natural gas-fired electric plant, providing clean, cheap, natural gas power in New York State. It was delayed and denied certification simply because, again, the radical left doesn't want it.

Last week, FERC took the authority granted to them under the Clean Water Act to override New York State's de-

nial of certification because New York had waived their authority under the law.

Section 401 of the Clean Water Act says that if a State "refuses to act on a request for a certification within a reasonable time period (which shall not exceed 1 year) after the receipt of such request, the certification requirements . . . shall be waived with respect to such Federal application."

With environmentalists increasingly urging States like New York, New Jersey, and Virginia to block pipelines by delaying or withholding otherwise valid certifications, these States are interfering with interstate commerce, a role that is clearly within the purview of the Federal Government.

I applaud the administration for the progress they have made and the independent agencies for taking a stand against the gamesmanship of the radical left, environmentalist groups, and those who do their bidding by using loopholes and their official authority to block valid, compliant energy projects from safely transporting cheaper and cleaner energy across State lines.

When the government works with industry, not against it, we start to see companies unleash investments across the country. In fact, the economy has picked up since Trump and his administration have come into office with the economy growing 3 percent in just the second quarter, which is the first full quarter under the administration, and the fastest pace of growth in 2 years, according to the website called CNN Money.

Each nomination, confirmation, or policy directive of President Trump and the Republican-led Congress signals to the business community and American workers that America is open for business again.

I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues to address our energy industry's needs so that private investors can be utilized to deliver American products to American consumers around the world. Just this week, I introduced a bill to address the known bottleneck issues that add unnecessary delays in the FERC permitting process by identifying participating agencies early in the process and providing contract reviews and providing transparency. This is something that is just common sense.

I thank very much Senator KING and his staff for working with me and my staff on this legislation, and I hope my colleagues will join us in getting these reforms into law.

I bring this up only because you would never know that this is progress that is being made in the economy through the Trump administration. Somehow that report has yet to get through.

TRIBUTE TO DAVID BOREN

Mr. President, I have another thing in mind. A lot of people who have been around in this Senate for a while remember the name of David Boren.

David Boren is from my State of Oklahoma. He was a Senator here for quite some period of time. He went on to be the president of Oklahoma University.

I am kind of excited about recognizing him, especially because David Boren and I, in 1967—before any of you guys were born—were elected to the State legislature in the State of Oklahoma. This is kind of funny because, at that time, people thought of Oklahoma as being a red State. Let me tell you, it wasn't a red State then. We had a House of Representatives of 100 people, and only 7 of us were Republicans; the rest were Democrats.

The way it is set up in the House of Representatives in Oklahoma—it is still true today, I believe—you have two members per desk. They would have two Democrats at one desk, two Republicans at one desk. Well, it came out uneven, so the only integrated desk was ours, that of David Boren, who was a Democrat, and I, who was a Republican.

It is kind of interesting also that the first thing we did—keep in mind, this was right after we took office in January of 1967. We came to Washington. We thought we were really important at that time. We were going to testify before a committee. That committee was called the Environment and Public Works Committee. I don't remember his name, but he was a very popular Democrat from West Virginia. He was, I think, the chairman of that committee.

I remember standing up and testifying before that as a junior Senator from the State of Oklahoma. I really thought I was something. I will tell my colleagues what I was testifying about. It was right after the Johnson administration, and I was protesting Lady Bird's Highway Beautification Act of 1965—taking private property away from people and all that.

It is interesting because David Boren and I were testifying before that committee way back in January of 1967, and I ended up chairing that same committee just a few years later. So that was the beginning.

Anyway, it was kind of interesting because David Boren being a Democrat and myself being a Republican and coming from a very strong, almost entirely Democratic State, we had an individual who is the—I can't remember his name—he was secretary of the treasury for the State of Oklahoma. So we started introducing the reforms. All the reforms in that decade were the product of David Boren, Democrat, and Republican JIM INHOFE. None of them ever passed, but we introduced all of these things.

So we put together a plan. We had a Governor at that time—it is not necessary to mention his name. He was a corrupt Governor, and he ended up in the penitentiary. We put together a plan of how to get him out of office. I would run for Governor as a Republican, I would win my nomination, and he would run for Governor as a Democrat, and of course he most likely

would lose—he was running against a very popular Democrat. Anyway, as it turned out, he won. Coming from a solid Democratic State, I can remember calling him up and saying: What do we do now? I think I was best advised to just go out of town until the campaign was over.

Anyway, we spent time together, and we had a great time. David did a great job as the University of Oklahoma's president. He would actually teach classes. He always put students first. So he did a great job.

I would say that it is fitting that he announced his retirement this year because this is his 50th year of public service, and he leaves a legacy of dedication and hard work and public service. His influence has shaped Oklahoma more than I think he ever thought he could. His daddy was Lyle Boren, who was a very popular Democratic House Member for a long period of time, and we all at that time became very close friends.

I don't think there has been a man who loved Oklahoma more and served our State more faithfully than David Boren.

God bless you, David Boren. Enjoy your retirement.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AFFORDABLE COLLEGE TEXTBOOK ACT

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, textbook costs are one of the most overlooked barriers to college affordability and access, and they are continuing to get more expensive.

Over the last decade, 2006 to 2016, the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index shows that consumer prices for college textbooks increased almost 90 percent. It means students have to spend more every year. In 2016 to 2017, the College Board recommended that students budget an average of \$1,250 for their books.

A survey released by the Student Public Interest Research Group reported that 65 percent of students decided not to buy a textbook because of

the cost, and 94 percent of those students worried it would hurt their grade.

This week, I joined with Senators AL FRANKEN and ANGUS KING and Representatives JARED POLIS and KYRSTEN SINEMA to reintroduce the Affordable College Textbook Act. This bill would establish a grant program to encourage the creation and use of high-quality open textbooks which are free to use. Greater access to and widespread use of these open textbooks can save each student who uses one hundreds of dollars, and, long term, it puts pressure on the traditional college textbook market to come up with affordable alternatives.

My home State of Illinois provides an example of how this bill would work. The University of Illinois used \$150,000 in Federal money to pilot an open textbook project at its main campus. The university, working with faculty, developed an open textbook, "Sustainability: A Comprehensive Foundation." This textbook was published electronically for free and open use. You can go online today and find it.

Instead of a student having to shell out \$150 or more for his or her introductory environmental sustainability class, he or she can use this free online book. That is a direct savings to a student every time a professor assigns this text in place of a traditional textbook. Today it is saving students money in Illinois, but also across the country at other colleges and universities where it has been adopted by faculty into their curriculum.

I would again like to thank my colleagues, Senators AL FRANKEN and ANGUS KING, for joining me in this effort. I would also like to thank the wide variety of organizations that support this bill, including the U.S. PIRG, SPARC, National Association of Big Ten Students, National Association of College Stores, American Association of Community Colleges, United Negro College Fund, and others.

Mr. President, I hope that my colleagues in Congress will join us in supporting this bill to create a program at the Federal level to encourage the creation and adoption of these materials. In the meantime, I hope students across the country will reach out to their professors and have this conversation with them. Ask them to adopt these free, quality materials that are available today.

FUNDING FOR SAFE, PUBLIC LATRINES IN AFRICA AND ASIA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, in the year 2017, when some people live in extravagant homes with half a dozen or a dozen bathrooms with marble floors and the latest fixtures, an estimated 2.5 billion people live in squalor with no access to modern sanitation. One billion people have no access to latrines and defecate in the open, like our ancestors did thousands of years ago.

The United States spends about \$400 million a year on water supply and sanitation programs worldwide, pursuant to the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005. One of our late colleague's many public policy contributions was his focus on pressing issues such as the growing scarcity of clean water sources—even in our own country—and the preventable suffering that comes from poor sanitation. His book, "Tapped Out," is another contribution he made to greater understanding of these challenges. The law named for him requires the Secretary of State, in consultation with the U.S. Agency for International Development and other U.S. Government agencies, to develop and implement a strategy to provide affordable and equitable access to safe water and sanitation in developing countries.

For the past several years, the Congress has directed that \$14 million of those funds be used specifically to design and build safe, public latrines in Africa and Asia. Our purpose has been to help reduce the risk to women and girls, particularly in rural areas in these countries, who are often assaulted at night or subjected to humiliation and harassment, due to the lack of safe and accessible latrines.

Unfortunately, USAID has not utilized these funds as effectively as we intended, and the fiscal year 2018 Department of State and Foreign Operations appropriations bill, which was reported unanimously by the Senate Appropriations Committee on September 7, specifies that not less than \$15 million shall be made available "to support initiatives by local communities in Africa and Asia to build and maintain safe, public latrines."

What we intend is not rocket science. Today communities in Africa and Asia, often with the assistance of small local or U.S. nongovernmental organizations like the Advocacy Project, are building low-cost, easy to maintain, public latrines. Something as basic as a latrine can transform a community, particularly for women and girls. Not only does it reduce their vulnerability to assault, it reduces the obvious health problems caused by open defecation. It also increases girls' access to education, if there are latrines for girls at schools. The cost of such projects can be as little as a few hundred dollars, particularly when members of the community volunteer their labor. Just as important as the design and construction is a plan for community members to regularly maintain the latrines and to educate the local population—men, women, and children—on their use.

Access to water and sanitation are fundamental to social and economic development. The lack of safe drinking water and proper sanitation, coupled with poor hygiene, are leading causes of sickness and death worldwide. Nearly 1,000 children under age 5 die each day from diarrhea caused by contaminated water and from poor sanitation and hygiene. There are few ways to